

Stem Cell Agency Board Approves Roadmap for Next Five Years; Invests \$5M in High School Internships

Posted: December 14, 2021

Oakland, CA – The governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) today approved a new Strategic Plan laying out a roadmap for the Stem Cell Agency for the next five years.

The plan builds on the achievements of Proposition 71, the voter approved ballot initiative that created the Agency in 2004, including:

- Supporting 76 clinical trials.
- Helping cure more than 40 children born with a rare, fatal immune disorder.
- Creating the Alpha Clinics Network that specializes in the delivery of stem cell therapies to patients.
- Training over 3000 students and scholars to become the future workforce of regenerative medicine.
- Stimulating California's economy with \$10.7 Billion in additional sales revenue and the creation of 56,000 new jobs (between 2004-2018)

The passage of Proposition 14 in 2020 has positioned CIRM to continue to accelerate research from discovery to clinical; to drive innovative, real-world solutions resulting in transformative treatments for patients; and to ensure the affordability and accessibility of those treatments to a diverse community of patients in an equitable manner, including those often overlooked or underrepresented in the past.

"We achieved a lot in the last 15 years and this provides a solid foundation for our strategy to bring us to the new era of CIRM and to deliver the full potential of regenerative medicine, says Dr. Maria T. Millan, the President and CEO of CIRM. "This plan lays out a roadmap for us to overcome the challenges in developing transformative therapies and making them accessible and affordable in an equitable fashion to a diverse California. The plan will guide us in that work through the development of novel scientific endeavors, effective healthcare delivery models, and expanded education and training programs."

The Strategic Plan is organized into three main themes:

- **Advance World Class Science** – Foster a culture of collaborative science by creating knowledge networks and shared research tools and technologies that encourage and facilitate data and resource sharing.
- **Deliver Real World Solutions** – Accelerate approval of therapies by optimizing our support models for CIRM-funded clinical trials with attention to including underserved communities; build the California Manufacturing Network to overcome manufacturing hurdles; and expand the Alpha Clinics network and create the Community Care Centers of Excellence to deliver therapies to a diverse patient population often in underserved communities.
- **Provide Opportunity for All** – Build a racially, ethnically and experientially diverse and highly skilled workforce to support the growing regenerative medicine economy in California; deliver a roadmap for access and affordability of regenerative medicine for all California patients.

Reflecting these goals, CIRM's new mission statement is: *Accelerating world class science to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments in an equitable manner to a diverse California and world.*

"We realize that these are ambitious goals but they are achievable," says Dr. Millan, "If CIRM is going to continue to be a global leader in the field of regenerative medicine, and to live up to the faith shown in us by the people of California, we believe we have to aim high. We have a terrific team, a clear vision and a determination to fulfill our mission. And that's what we intend to do."

The CIRM Board also approved investing \$5.33 million in 11 projects for our SPARK high school summer research program. SPARK (Summer Program to Accelerate Regenerative medicine Knowledge) provides high school students with hands-on training in stem cell research through summer internships at world class research facilities.

The goal is to inspire their interest in regenerative medicine. The programs also emphasize recruiting and appointing a diverse group of students that reflect California's diversity and includes socio-economically disadvantaged students who might otherwise not be able to afford an internship like this.

State Senator Art Torres (Ret.) J.D., the Vice Chair of the CIRM Board praised the program saying; "As the founder of SPARK with our Science Officers I am so proud of the future stem cell scientists that have emerged from SPARK and have become truly inspiring!"

The SPARK awards go to:

APPLICATION #	TITLE	INSTITUTION	AMOUNT
EDUC3-13179	Stem Cell Summer Research Experience	U.C. San Francisco	\$508,750
EDUC3-13114	Supporting Underrepresented STudents Adapting to Change: Summer Program to Accelerate Regenerative Medicine Knowledge (SUSTAIN a SPARK)	UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland	\$255,750
EDUC3-13117	Train, Educate, and Accelerate Mastery of Stem cell research (TEAMS) program	City of Hope	\$508,750
EDUC3-13101	Mentored High School Summer Research Program	Cedars-Sinai	\$508,750
EDUC3-13126	Summer Program To Accelerate Regenerative Medicine Knowledge (SPARK)	U.C. San Diego	\$506,712
EDUC3-13127	Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Summer Internships for High School Students from Under-Served Communities	Children's Hospital of Los Angeles	\$508,750
EDUC3-13234	Summer Training and Research Inspiration for Diverse Pipeline Engagement toward Advancing Stem Cell Treatment (STRIDE)	U.C. Riverside	\$509,000

EDUC3-13123	Stem Cells & STEM Education - a Summer Internship Program for California High School Students	Sanford-Burnham	\$509,000
EDUC3-13168	Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine - High School Summer Research Internship	Stanford	\$508,750
EDUC3-13153	Internship at a Cutting Edge CIRM-funded Stem Cell Research Facility	U.C. Davis	\$508,750
EDUC3-13129	Exposing Students to Regenerative Medicine (ExStRM)	Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science	\$499,500

The Board also took time to honor Dr. Oswald Steward, a founding member of the CIRM Board who is stepping down because of term limits. Os, as everyone called him, was a key figure in CIRM's development, helping establish the Agency's foundational procedures and policies and serving in leadership roles throughout his tenure on the Board, including as co-Chair of the Grants Working Group and Chair of the Science Subcommittee.

"As our longest standing Board member, it would be difficult to overstate the impact Os had on CIRM's direction and success over the past 16 years," says Jonathan Thomas, the CIRM Board Chair. "He brought a blend of scientific expertise, procedural rigor and patient empathy to the table that helped enable CIRM's world class portfolio. He was a wonderful colleague and a true pleasure to work with for all members of the greater CIRM family. Thanks Os for everything."

Board member Judy Gasson said she would miss him; "I don't know how we are going to replace Os. I learned a lot from listening to him. At CIRM we would often have long debates on a variety of issues and usually I would wait for Os to raise his hand and hear what he had to say. He was very wise and would come up with a very creative solution to achieving the goal we had all agreed upon."

About CIRM

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$5.5 billion in funding and more than 150 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is the world's largest institution dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information go to www.cirm.ca.gov

Source URL: <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/newsroom/press-releases/12142021/stem-cell-agency-board-approves-roadmap-next-five-years>